



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CROATIA

DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE

More Effective Citizen Participation and Improved Governance



USAID Mission Director, William Jeffers and the Mayor of Sibenik, Nedjeljka Klaric signed a Memorandum of Understanding to improve asset management and e-government in the City of Sibenik.

Program Objective

Since its independence in 1991, Croatia spent the first ten years engaged in or recovering from war. The subsequent five-year period found Croatia needing to build local government, political, judicial and civil institutions which reflected its own vision for the future.

Initial USAID democracy activities focused on strengthening civil society organizations, building capacity of political parties, and development of an independent media. In the late 1990s, efforts focused on increasing public access to information, promoting greater participation in elections and policy-making, and improving transparency and accountability of government institutions, including development of an independent judiciary. The large NGO development program supported NGOs in key areas such as human rights, women's issues and social welfare and reconciliation. USAID democracy-building programs had a major impact on parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 that led to a change in government.

USAID democracy building activities in the last years of the program were in two broad areas: local governance and civil society. USAID also had a small anti-trafficking in persons activity that was designed to increase awareness of the Croatian population. Rule of law programs helped make legal proceedings more transparent and efficient, aiding citizens' ability to obtain justice through the courts.

Within all activities, USAID promoted policy reform to improve government practices and the responsiveness of local and national government to citizens' needs.